

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

**LISTING OF CLAIMS:**

1. (currently amended): A tetraalkylphosphonium salt having at least one branched alkyl chain containing 912 to 100 carbon atoms in total.
  
2. (original): The tetraalkylphosphonium salt according to claim 1, wherein said branched alkyl chain contains 12 to 50 carbon atoms in total.
  
3. (original): The tetraalkylphosphonium salt according to claim 1, wherein said branched alkyl chain contains 16 to 36 carbon atoms in total.
  
4. (original): The tetraalkylphosphonium salt according to claim 1, wherein said branched alkyl chain is 2-butyloctyl group, 2-hexyldecyl group, 2-octyldodecyl group, 2-decytetradecyl group, 2-dodecylhexadecyl group, 2-tetradecyloctadecyl group, 2-hexadecylcosyl group, 3,5,5-trimethylhexyl group, 3,7-dimethyloctyl group or 3,7,11,15-tetramethylhexadecyl group.
  
5. (currently amended): The tetraalkylphosphonium salt according to claim 1, wherein said branched alkyl chain branches at the 2-position.

6. (original): The tetraalkylphosphonium salt according to claim 5, wherein said branched alkyl chain is 2-hexadecylicosyl group.

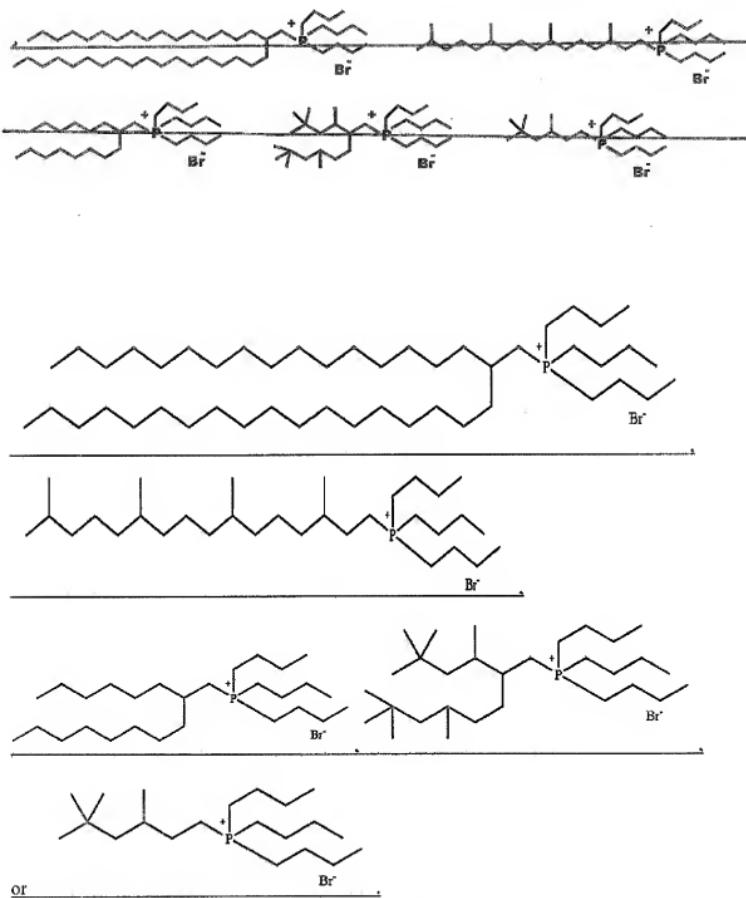
7. (original): The tetraalkylphosphonium salt according to claim 1, wherein alkyl chains other than said branched alkyl chain each contains 4 or more carbon atoms in total.

8. (original): The tetraalkylphosphonium salt according to claim 1, wherein alkyl chains other than said branched alkyl chain are the same.

9. (original): The tetraalkylphosphonium salt according to claim 8, wherein alkyl chains other than said branched alkyl chain are n-butyl group.

10. (original): The tetraalkylphosphonium salt according to claim 1, which comprises an anion selected from the group consisting of anions of halogen atom, p-toluenesulfonic acid,  $\text{BF}_4^-$ ,  $\text{ClO}_4^-$ ,  $\text{PF}_6^-$  and  $\text{NO}_3^-$ .

11. (currently amended): The tetraalkylphosphonium salt according to claim 1, which has one of the following structures:



12. (canceled).

13. (withdrawn-currently amended): The An organically modified layered silicate according to claim 12 containing the tetraalkylphosphonium salt according to claim 1 between layers of a layered silicate, wherein said layered silicate is selected from the group consisting of clay minerals and hydrotalcite compounds.

14. (withdrawn-currently amended): The An organically modified layered silicate containing the tetraalkylphosphonium salt according to claim 1 between layers of a layered silicate according to claim 12, wherein said layered silicate is selected from the group consisting of kaolinite, dickite, nacrite, halloysite, antigorite, chrysotile, pyrophyllite, montmorillonite, beidellite, nontronite, saponite, saucomite, stevensite, hectorite, tetrasilicic mica, sodium taeniolite, muscovite, margarite, talc, vermiculite, phlogopite, xanthophyllite or chlorite.

15. (withdrawn-currently amended): The An organically modified layered silicate containing the tetraalkylphosphonium salt according to claim 1 between layers of a layered silicate according to claim 12, wherein said layered silicate has an average length of 0.01 to 50  $\mu\text{m}$ .

16. (withdrawn-currently amended): ~~The~~ An organically modified layered silicate containing the tetraalkylphosphonium salt according to claim 1 between layers of a layered silicate~~according to claim 12~~, wherein said layered silicate has an aspect ratio of 20 to 500.

17. (withdrawn-currently amended): ~~The~~ An organically modified layered silicate containing the tetraalkylphosphonium salt according to claim 1 between layers of a layered silicate~~according to claim 12~~, wherein said layered silicate has a cation exchange capacity of 10 to 200 meq/100 g.

18. (withdrawn-currently amended): ~~The~~ An organically modified layered silicate containing the tetraalkylphosphonium salt according to claim 1 between layers of a layered silicate~~according to claim 12~~, wherein 5% or more of the equivalents of the ion-exchangeable inorganic ions in said layered silicate are exchanged by said tetraalkylphosphonium salt.

19. (withdrawn-currently amended): A composition comprising the ~~an~~ organically modified layered silicate containing the tetraalkylphosphonium salt according to claim 1 between layers of a layered silicate~~according to claim 12~~ and an organic solvent.

20. (canceled).